Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved,
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

My Egoistic San Francisco correspondent misapprehends the language of the motto which John Hay's finest poem has furnished to Liberty. Read by itself, it is capable, I admit, of two meanings. But read in connection with the rest of the poem, it clearly has but one. The poem was printed in full in No. 121 of Liberty. It is a very striking presentation of an analogy between Liberty and the sea, showing that just as we bow before the majesty of the sea and trust ourselves to it, whether "lying calm and beautiful," or "freshened by the busy winds," or "lashed by tempests," so we trust ourselves to Liberty in all its phases. We trust the sea although it sometimes shipwrecks us, and we trust Liberty although it sometimes slays us. The words "though thou slay us, we will trust in thee" by no means indicate a blind worship of Liberty without consideration of consequences, but only that, weighing advantages against disadvantages, we find trust in Liberty preferable to trust in Authority.

Mr. Westrup's estimate of the Chicago "Economic Conferences," given in another column, does not coincide with other reports that I have heard. Several Chicago Anarchists have spoken to me most enthusiastically of the good that these conferences have done, and I have had the best of evidence that there was no disposition on the part of the managers to exclude the Anarchistic view of the money question. Is it not possible that the boycott was directed against Mr. Westrup rather than against his subject? So I have heard. While Mr. Westrup may be right in the position that he has taken regarding a standard of value, he should not forget that the majority of believers in free money consider that position a deplorable heresy, and should not blame the managers of the "Economic Conferences" for seeking an exponent of the free money theory who could give a really representative view. In reminding him of this, I take pleasure in adding that all Anarchists appreciate the valuable services which Mr. Westrup has rendered in the cause of monetary freedom.

Comrade Mackay writes me from Berlin that the well-known Paris publishers, Tresse & Stock, will immediately issue a French translation of "The Anarchists." This is excellent tidings. Nothing could have a healthier effect in Paris just at present than this book. The dynamite excitement is sure to give it a large sale, and the consequent wide reading and reviewing of the work will teach the press and public that Anarchism and dynamite are not synonymous: that Anarchism means the absence of government, while dynamite, in the witty words of Rochefort, is "neither governmental nor anti-governmental, but simply explosive." The logical French mind will appreciate the *consequent* extremism of Mackay's position, and cannot fail to contrast it favorably with the inharmonious conglomeration of Communistic doctrines which, in forgetfulness of Proudhon, has come to be regarded in France as Anarchism. Comrade Mackay also writes that a cheap German edition is to appear in August. This too is badly needed, as the price of the original edition — an elegant paper volume — is $1.25.

Chicago hasn't money enough to pay for her Fair and wants Congress to give her some. Why doesn't she do as France did, — borrow the needed cash of the people in their individual capacities? France made each ticket of admission to her Fair a lottery ticket also, and sold these tickets in advance, agreeing to repay to each purchaser the full price of the ticket at the end of seventy-five years, and giving him, in lieu of interest and in addition to admission to the Fair, a chance in eighty-one lottery drawings for prizes ranging from $100,000 downward. As a result there was a great rush for the tickets, an immense sum was realized at an early date, every one got full value for his money, and no one was coerced. Why doesn't Chicago do likewise? Because the people of Chicago, and of America generally, are so much more foolish and superstitious than the people of France that they consider such a course immoral. On the other hand, to induce Congress to take the money from the people's pockets against their individual wills and hand it over to Chicago seems to them a perfectly moral proceeding. To forcibly impose upon another a certainty of loss is moral because of the certainty and in spite of the coercion; to invite another to freely expose himself to a chance of loss in consideration of a counterbalancing chance of gain is immoral because of the uncertainty and in spite of the liberty of action. The voluntary principle, which to the egoist is the true social standard, offers no criterion to the moralist, who judges conduct by its conformity to some ethical code that lays down law for others instead of recognizing their liberty.

I am not surprised to hear, at this season, the annually recurring complaint about running open street cars early in the spring. Last year the Health Commissioners of Brooklyn attempted to prevent the use of such cars at what they considered unseasonable times, but were successfully resisted by the companies and cruelly neglected by the poor, ignorant, protection-needing public. This year the New York Health Board inaugurates the crusade, and congratulates itself on the discovery of a section in the sanitary code which admits of being construed into a positive prohibition of the act in question. The Board proposes to apply to the soulless street car companies the provision which forbids the "doing of anything dangerous to the life or detrimental to the health of any human being," the contention being that the running of open cars in certain kinds of weather is detrimental to health and tends to produce colds, etc. Assuredly nothing can be urged in rebuttal of this contention; but it is curious to note that the Board overlooks the fact that, in order to make out its case, another point has to be conclusively proved, — that the companies, in running open cars, *do* anything to the public. A little reflection shows that the companies are purely passive, that, so far as the public is concerned, they cannot be said to "do" anything. They provide cars, which the public is free to use or let severely alone. In deciding to use the cars, the public "does" something which is, possibly, detrimental to health, while the companies do nothing, since the cars would not be detrimental to health if boycotted by the public. It may be rejoined that the companies are chartered on the ground of public convenience, and that legislative regulation may extend to the kind of cars to be used, as it does to a number of other things relating to the service. Perhaps so; but in the absence of specific legislative provision, the kind of cars to be used is left to the discretion and self-interest of the companies. I do not believe any court would sanction the absurd construction put upon the above-quoted section of the sanitary code by the Health Board.

When.

When will all the world go right?
Never! — Right is infinite.
When will all the world go well?
That is different; I will tell:
When each man shall do no less
Nor more than mind his business,
And others would risk life and limb
Who dared to interfere with him; —
This whenever you shall see,
The world will then wag merrily.

Harry Lyman Koopman.

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestige of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel."—Proudhon.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Solitude.

A traveller in the wild places in Africa found himself left alone in the midst of a people who spared his life only because they were amused by what were to them his peculiarities; and because, being many against one, they had no fear of him.

They were a savage tribe indeed. It was the custom, he found, among them for the head men to every day traverse the country, taking from each of the common people whatever to the head men seemed desirable.

From one a basket of plantains would be demanded; from another his domesticated buffalo; from a third might be required his hut and all that he had. Strange to say, those who were thus robbed did not regard themselves as treated unjustly.

They resigned whatever was demanded with every sign of acquiescence and deference for the head man who carried it off.

Even when the sacrifice was great and inward reluctance was felt, external complaisance was inculcated by the medicine men and was regarded as very praiseworthy. Those who were robbed of all afterwards wandered about destitute, despised, strange to say, rather than pitied by their former comrades; and deeming themselves most fortunate if they were not thrown into the cave of snakes to perish.

In other respects, too, the gross savagery of the people was shown. In order to stir them up to one of their marauding excursions it was only necessary to go among them and announce that the totem of their tribe had been insulted. This totem was a rough pole with a bunch of red and white rags at the top and was regarded by the people as sacred. Each one kept a miniature model of the totem in his hut, alongside of the model of the divinity and sharing religious honors with it.

To touch roughly or even to look askance at the totem meant instant death.

At the slightest pretence even that a neighboring tribe had insulted this totem, the people would rush forth like an angry nest of hornets and massacre indiscriminately with the deadly weapons which they spent much of their time in trying to improve. To destroy and give pain to others seemed to be to them a pleasure.

The traveller, distressed by so much misery where there might be happiness, talked to the most intelligent among them persuasively. "Why should you devote every seventh day to cutting and burning yourselves and your children? Surely you might find some pleasanter mode of worship, if you must worship."

And the man replied: "The loving father Bobo, and the great son Luni, and the immaculate mother Gummi, have commanded us to do so, and we are afraid not to. Moreover, beware how you talk so blasphemously; if I were not a very liberal man, you would certainly have your tongue cut out."

"At least," answered the traveller, "would you not be happier if you should stop killing your neighbors so much? If you would devote the energy and thought which you now devote to destroying, to improving your houses, increasing your crops, and enlarging your herds, I should think you would be better off. What is this totem that you are forever fighting about? A bunch of rags!"

"Take care," said the savage, "though I am liberal, you must not insult the totem even to me. I pardon you this time, but be warned and keep your mouth shut about our glorious totem. Not fight for the totem? What miserable pusillanimity! What lack of patriotism! Not fight? How can you ask such nonsensical questions? Fighting will always be. You must change men's natures if you want fighting to stop. And men's natures can not be changed."

With that he brought two or three more liberal savages like himself to hear what further paradoxes this queer creature would emit.

Striving to find a topic that would arouse neither their religious nor their patriotic emotions, the traveller continued:

"Permit me to suggest at least that for the head men to take from the others the greater part of their possessions is unfair to the others, and, after all, unprofitable to the head men, for they have enough already, and only waste what they have thus stolen in luxuries which they would be far happier without."

Thereupon there was a howl from all. "This is a dangerous fellow," said the old savage, who knew the sacred books by heart, and settled all disputes by reference to them. "he attacks the rights of property."

"Such things cannot be changed without a bloody revolution," said the medicine man; "surely you, who object to blood, would not counsel violence."

"I do not see the necessity for it," said the traveller; "they are few, the people are many; all the people need do is to refuse to give their property to the robbers."

"Revolutionary! cut-throat! atheist!" they all screamed. "You would take people's little savings from them, would you? You want to burn our huts and kill our cattle and bring desolation upon us, do you?"

"That is not exactly what I meant to suggest," the traveller replied, "but, if you cannot understand what seems to me a simple enough proposition, I rather think I shall do well not to press it, until your powers of comprehension develop. There is one thing, though, that I would call your attention to that can hardly jar upon any of your superstitions; I refer to the treatment of your wives. You would find them much more efficient workers and agreeable companions, they would be less likely too to have deformed and helpless children, if you would club them more mercifully, let us say so as not to maim them. It would really require no self-denial; it might even give you pleasure to stop short of breaking their arms and gashing their flesh."

The medicine man stepped solemnly forward. "You are attacking the holiest of our institutions," he said. "Our society is built upon the right of a man to club his wife and children. It is an arrangement which has the divine sanction of the holy Luni. The family with us is sacred. You are alone, therefore we spare your life. You may walk among us, but you must not talk in this way, for, if such ideas grow, they must be suppressed. Hereafter be silent at your peril."

The traveller perceived that they were savages, that it was no use appealing to thought where there was no thought. He perceived that they lived by a set of inwrought traditions and customs, and had no power to even try to improve things.

So he lived alone, though surrounded by savages. He grieved because he was alone.

At last one day he ate a poisonous root and died, that he might escape from an intolerable life among savages.

Who will give me of hemlock or mandragora by which I may remove myself from the savages among whom I dwell?

John Beverley Robinson.

A Plea for Words That Burn.

In the May number of the "Nineteenth Century" Mona Caird has an admirable article entitled "A Defence of the So-called 'Wild Women,'" "wild women" being the name given by the whilom progressive but now reactionary Mrs. Lynn Linton to those women who desire freedom for their sex. Readers of Liberty should not content themselves with the brief extract for which only I am able to find room in another column, but should procure the whole article. The extract suffices, however, to show that Mona Caird preaches magnificently that doctrine of revolution by ideas which Liberty has so long championed. But I notice that she parenthetically condemns violence of language, which Liberty has never taken pains to avoid. For my own part, I have never been able to appreciate the claimed analogy between violence of language and physical violence. The only sensible opponents of the latter base their opposition on the ground either that it is invasive or that it fails to accomplish its object. Now, violence of language is not necessarily an invasion, if we mean by invasion that which the principle of equal liberty entitles us to forcibly prevent; and to say that it fails to accomplish its object is to beg the question. I think that it often succeeds where nothing else would. It is noticeable, moreover, that all those who de-

plore violence of language (I have never known an exception from Jesus to J. Wm. Lloyd) indulge in it more or less. Mona Caird herself, in the very sentence in which she pronounces against it, uses the two violent adjectives "cowardly" and "senseless." "Oh!" perhaps Mrs. Caird will reply, "I apply those adjectives only to an act, not to a person." Tweedledum and tweedledee, my dear madam! Any man who has risen a fraction of an inch above the brute in intellectual stature, any man whose mind possesses the smallest power of inference, feels the blow as keenly when his act is denounced as when he himself is denounced. Therefore it is no more unkind to speak violently of a person than of his act or of an act like his. If violence of language is really a bad thing, let us have no false distinctions, but avoid it altogether. But while I hold the view that it is often healthful and helpful, I shall continue to use it. T.

Government Architecture.

A few weeks ago a delegation, including some of the leading architects of the country, appeared before the House committee on public buildings and grounds and argued in favor of thoroughly reforming the present system of carrying on the construction of public buildings. Various attempts, it seems, had been made by the profession to improve the condition of Government architecture, but they had all failed. The present effort promises to bring about some desirable results, however. The representations of the delegation have so impressed the committee that a bill has been reported to the House which proposes to give the architectural talent of the country an opportunity to serve the Government. The Secretary is authorized to obtain plans, drawings, specifications, and local supervision for public buildings by the system of competitive examinations among private architects. The powers of the supervising architect of the Treasury are to remain as they are at present, with the exception that he will not be charged with the preparations of the drawings and specifications. Under the present system, the supervisor of Government buildings is also, at least in theory, their architect. Now, as the committee's report says, "it is physically impossible for one man to devote sufficient thought and time to the proper designing and preparation of plans and specifications for fifty or sixty buildings each year which, in their artistic expression, shall be creditable to the nation . . . and that, in economy of construction, shall do justice to those from whom the cost is drawn," especially if this man has many other things to attend to. As a matter of fact, the designs of new buildings are not prepared by the supervisor, but by the subordinates in his office, and the work which requires the best efforts of leading architects is intrusted to fifth-rate hands.

The results of this system are such as might be expected. At the hearing before the committee, it was shown that the Government buildings cost from half as much again to twice as much per cubic foot as such great edifices as the Chicago Auditorium and the Boston Public Library, without including in the cost of the former the expenses of the supervising architect's office, while in the latter the architect's fees are included. And in the report, the committee, after adverting to this and other features of the present system, goes on to say,—

> Another very serious evil is the length of time required to construct and complete one of these buildings. A building which, if the property of a private citizen, would be constructed in months, when erected by the Government requires years for its completion. This necessarily results in great wastefulness and loss of money to the Government by the payment of unnecessary salaries of superintendents and other agents, by the expense of watching and caring for the materials and structure, and by the loss, waste, and deterioration of such material, besides the inconvenience to the citizens resulting from such delayed construction. As an illustration of the extent to which this evil may extend under present methods, your committee would call your attention to the last annual report of the supervising architect in relation to the public building at Detroit, Mich., where the construction was authorized eleven years ago, and $1,300,000 therefor has been appropriated by Congress years since, and the foundation walls are not yet completed.

It is doubtful whether any considerable improvement would follow the adoption of the plan suggested in the new bill. I have little faith that Government architecture, any more than Government engineering or Government astronomy, can be made to yield results approaching those of private enterprise; but I welcome the attempt to introduce the element of competition into work undertaken by the Government. It will certainly be to the manifest interest of the private competitors to direct attention to these superior achievements and to the defects of official management. V. Y.

Was the Money Question Dodged?

To the Editor of Liberty:

What has become of the Economic Club? Chicago has had no "Economic Conferences" this year.

The Economic Club was organized here four years ago for the purpose of solving the labor question. The programme was to hold "Conferences" alternately in the interests of capital and labor. For three years this was kept up; a dozen or so lectures were delivered each year on Sunday evenings; one Sunday the capitalist or employer would be represented and the next Sunday some one would speak in the interest of labor. This last winter there have been no "conferences." What is the reason? Has the Club given up the job?

After all, what has been gained by the effort? The conservatives started out with the idea that they were going to show that the claims of the working people were absurd; that they had no just grounds for complaint. In this they were most ignominiously beaten. Notwithstanding their wealth and culture, the ablest lecturers came from the other side. They were defeated in argument and in the presentation of facts from first to last. Did they acknowledge their defeat? No. Instead of manfully and honorably admitting defeat and making some effort at a remedy, they quietly let the matter drop. Instead of "putting up," they "shut up."

From the first it looked to me like a make-believe, a hollow pretence that there was intention to do justice. The vital question was ignored, "suppressed." At the second series of "conferences" two lectures were announced on the money question. Clinton Furbish was to speak on the Greenback issue. The subject on the other side was "Honest Money," but the space for the lecturer's name was blank. I had made an effort to be heard at the first "conference," but was told that it was "too late." The Club was a kind of secret society; no one seemed to know who the other members of the club were, or how the lecturers were appointed.

It was Mr. Lyman J. Gage who handed me a card announcing the lectures for the second series of Conferences. I noticed the blank space opposite the subject "Honest Money," and asked him if I could have the privilege of being the speaker on that subject, as it just suited me. He told me that it was the conservatives' turn that evening. I answered him very emphatically that they would not be able to find a conservative that would venture to expose himself to the criticism of that audience on that subject.

At one of the subsequent Conferences I met Mr. Gage, and asked him if they had found a lecturer for "Honest Money." He said "no"; that they "had suppressed the subject!"

Later I met Mr. Franklin MacVeagh and told him of my conversation with Mr. Gage. He answered me: "Well, we are going to select the lecturers at once for next year and give them a whole year to prepare themselves." I said to him: "You may take a whole year, and even then you will not find a man that will venture to defend honest money from the conservative side before that audience with the privilege of asking questions."

At the next and last "Conferences" the money question was not on the programme at all.

Thus ended the all-wool and double-width Chicago "Economic Conferences."

ALFRED B. WESTRUP.
529 W. GROVE AVE., OAK PARK, ILL.

Liberty's Teachings.

To the Editor of Liberty:

I send you two dollars for your "precious" paper, so much more valuable (in exchange) than heretofore, because I think you tell the "costly" truth of a possible society held in equilibrium by mutualism, whose members will not be compelled to pay Church or State for the privilege of exchanging value for value in sex relations, or impertinently questioned by each other concerning former or future transactions; wherein people will not be aggressed upon to protect them from aggression; wherein men shall not be prevented by violence from producing wealth by means of unused media, or from adopting a currency adapted to the ends of rational commerce; wherein thoughtful persons shall regard actions with like or dislike in proportion as the results may reasonably be expected to increase or diminish the sum of their happiness, etc. By the way, does Liberty, as an Egoistic Anarchist, approve the line: "And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee"? An answer in a "Picket Note" would be pleasant reading for

H. C. B. COWELL.
527 SHOTWELL ST., SAN FRANCISCO, MAY 10, 1892.

Revolution by Intelligence.

(Mona Caird in Nineteenth Century.)

The emancipation of woman and the emancipation of the manual worker will go hand in hand. If this generation is wise and sane, it will conduct these two movements in a fashion new to history. Taking warning by the experience of the past, it will avoid the weak old argument of violence (even in language) as a strong and intelligent teacher avoids the cowardly and senseless device of corporal punishment. It will conduct its revolution by means of the only weapon that has ever given a victory worth winning: Intelligence.

Mankind has tried blood and thunder long enough; they have not answered. The counter-stroke is as strong as the original impetus, and we expiate our error in the wearisome decades of a reaction. No revolution can be achieved to any purpose that is not organic; it must rest upon a real change in the sentiment and constitution of humanity. We are not governed by armies and police, we are governed by ideas; and this power that lies in human opinion is becoming strengthened with every advance that we make in civilization, and in the rapidity with which ideas are communicated from man to man, and from nation to nation. The whole course of civilization tends towards the dethronement of brute force in favor of the force of thought and of sentiment. It behooves women, above all, to conduct their movement in a quiet, steady, philosophic, and genial spirit; regarding the opposition that they receive, as much as possible, from the point of view of the student rather than of the partisan; realizing that in this greatest of

al social revolutions they must expect the fiercest resistance; that men in opposing them are neither better nor worse than all human beings of either sex have shown themselves to be as soon as they became possessors of power over their fellows. The noblest cannot stand the test, and of average men and women it makes bullies and tyrants. If this general fact be borne in mind throughout the struggle, it will be easier to avoid the feelings of bitterness and rancor which the sense of injustice creates; it will remind those engaged in the encounter to regard it with calmer eyes, as one would regard the history of past events: it will teach them to be prepared for defeat while hoping for success, and not to be too much dismayed if the change for which they have striven so hard must be delayed until long after they are dead, and all those who would have rejoiced in it are no longer there to see the sun rise over the promised land. It will teach them, too, to realize more strongly than most of us are inclined to do, that men and women are brothers and sisters, bound to stand or fall together; that in trying to raise the position and condition of women, they are serving at least as much the men who are to be their husbands or sons; that, in short — to quote the saying of Hegel — "The master does not become really free till he has liberated his slave."

Wouldn't Exercise His "Freeman's Will."

To the Editor of Liberty:

Allow me to add my poor congratulations to the others you have received since bobbing up so serenely in the metropolis of America.

I passed my twenty-first birthday in November last, but was Egoist enough to shun the ballot-box, although the temptation to cast my "first vote" would, otherwise, have been somewhat strong. But — success to Liberty! I disown the State, the Government, henceforth and forever, and am

Yours truly,
A. H. Jaeger.

Philadelphia, May 15, 1892.

The Unknowable Known.

[L'Echo de Paris.]

"You see, Pierre, God is a being who has neither beginning nor end. We cannot comprehend him: he is a mystery."

"Why, yes, Mamma, I comprehend him well enough; he is like the Belt Line Railway."

That is No Liberty.

Out of their graves arising, out of that sore sight
Of comrades stricken for their brilliant light
Of love, and out of Death's dew-dropping night,
For us a passion and a power,
To tell the world for them what their mute lips would say,
Could they once more reanimate that clay
Which hatred of a class essayed to slay,
Not knowing Life is Death's inevitable dower.

This then remember, Brothers, this, at any rate,
That love begetteth love, its kind, or soon or late,
And hate eternally must bring forth hate.
That is no liberty which uses might
To wreak revenge for deeds of folly, force, and fraud.
Again man's iron law, again outlawed
Our fellows fight us, in their turn, unawed
By freedom's majesty unarmed dispelling night.

Miriam Daniell.

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